

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 01081 072038Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 1081

STADIS//////////

REF: STATE 21881

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, NI, IS, PO, MG

SUBJECT: AAI PRESIDENT'S INTENTION TO DISCUSS ISRAELI  
RELATIONS WITH GENERAL GOWON

1. SUMMARY: AAI PRESIDENT HOPES SEE GENERAL GOWON AND  
EXPRESS CONCERN OVER HARMFUL EFFECT AFRICAN LACK OF EVEN-HANDEDNESS  
IN ARAB/ISRAELI WAR HAS HAD AMONG SOME US  
CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORTERS OF BLACK AFRICAN INTERESTS. HE  
WILL EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE OF AFRICAN STATES' KEEPING SUCH  
CONSIDERATIONS IN MIND AS THEY SEEK TO RETAIN AND STRENGTHEN  
US SUPPORT ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES. END SUMMARY.

2. WILLIAM COTTER, PRESIDENT OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN INSTITUTE,  
CALLED ON CHARGE FEBRUARY 6, SAID HE HOPES SEE MEA PERMSEC  
IYALLA, MINED COMMISSIONER EKE AND PERSEC JODAH, MINAG  
BUKAR-SHAIB, AND GENERAL GOWON (LATTER PERSHAPS FEBRUARY  
8 OR 9).

3. RE DISCUSSION WITH GOWON, COTTER SAID THE GENERAL HAD  
GREATLY ENJOYED HIS EXPERIENCE AT DEDICATION OF AAI OFFICES  
IN NEW YORK LAST FALL AND COTTER WANTS DISCUSS PLANS FOR  
FURTHER PRIVATE ACTIVITIES GOWON MIGHT UNDERTAKE WITH AAI IF  
HE MAKES STATE VISIT TO US.

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PAGE 02 LAGOS 01081 072038Z

4. PRINCIPAL POINT COTTER WANTS TO BRING UP WITH GOWON, HOWEVER, IF FORMER'S CONCERN THAT ATTITUDE AMONG SOME US CONGRESSMENTWOARD BLACK AFRICA HAS SOURED AS RESULT OF ARAB/ISRAELI WAR. A NUMBER OF LIBERAL CONGRESSMEN WHO HAVE BEEN INTERESTED IN AFRICA AND BLACK AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT WERE ALSO OF PRO-ISRAELI GROUP, AND AFRICAN BREAK IN RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL DISTURBED AND SHOOK THEM. CONCURRENTLY, THESE AND OTHER CONGRESSMEN WERE IMPRESSED BY PORTUGUESE COOPERATION IN FACILITATING FERRYING OF AIRCRAFT AND SUPPLIES FROM US TO ISRAEL VIA AZORES BASE. COTTER FEARS COMBINATION OF THESE FACTORS MAY UNDERCUT CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR BLACK AFRICAN VIEW ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES AND ENCOURAGE US MOVEMENT IN UNDESIRABLE DIRECTIONS. COTTER PRAISED STATE DEPT FOR WINNING SIX-MONTH DELAY IN RENEGOTIATION OF AZORES' BASE AGREEMENT AS THIS SHOULD ALLOW FIRST FLUSH OF UNQUESTIONING PRO-PORTUGUESE SENTIMENT TO DISSIPATE SOMEWHAT. AT SAME TIME, HE REFERRED TO PRESS REPORTS OF GOP OFFER OF NAVAL BASE FOR US IN MOZAMBIQUE TO COUNTER SOVIET NAVAL BUILD-UP IN INDIAN OCEAN. COTTER IS CONCERNED THAT PRO-PORTUGUESE AND ANTI-AFRICAN SHIFT IN CONGRESS MIGHT MAKE SUCH A DEVELOPMENT POSSIBLE.

5. COTTER SAID HE INTENDS MAKE ABOVE POINTS TO GOWON AND ASK IF AND WHEN AFRICAN REESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. HE SAID HE PLANNED TO EMPHASIZE THE UNFAVORABLE EFFECT THAT ONE-SIDED AFRICAN ESPOUSAL OF ARAB CAUSE HAS HAD IN CONGRESS AND WOULD URGE THAT IT WOULD BE HELPFUL IF FMG AND OTHERS COULD AT LEAST MAKE SOME GENERAL STATEMENT INDICATING INTEREST IN EVENHANDED AND JUST SOLUTION IN ME WHICH WOULD OPEN WAY TO REESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS WITH "ALL PARTIES."

6. CHARGE TOLD COTTER THAT WHILE GOWON WAS OBVIOUSLY RELUCTANT TO BREAK WITH ISRAEL IN THE FIRST PLACE, HE WOULD LIKELY HESITITATE TO TAKE THE LEAD IN REESTABLISHING RELATIONS UNLESS CIRCUMSTANCES PROVIED SOME UNDISPUTED JUSTIFICATION FOR IT. RE MOZAMBIQUE BASE PROPOSAL, CHARGE VENTURED OPINION THAT THIW WAS FAR OUT IDEA, HIGHLY UN- LIKELY TO COME TO FRUITION FOR VARIETY OF PRACTICAL AND POLITICAL REASONS. ALTHOUGH COTTER WAS NOT FULLY CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 LAGOS 01081 072038Z

CONVINCED, HE AGREED TO LEAVE THIS OUT OF HIS PRESENTATION TO GOWON AS IT MIGHT TEND ATTRIBUTE TO MOZAMBIQUE PROPOSAL AN IMPORTANCE IT DOES NOT HAVE AND MIGHT ALSO BE TAKEN BY SENSITIVE NIGERIANS AS INDIRECT THREAT OR PRESSURE ON THEM. CHARGE SAID HE THOUGH COTTER'S POINT ABOUT HARMFUL EFFECT OF AFRICAN LACK OF EVENHANDEDNESS IN A/I WAR WOULD BE USEFUL TO MAKE; HE SAID EMPHASIS ON CURRENT WARMTH OF FEELING TOWARD PORTUGAL MIGHT HOWEVER RAISE NIGERIAN SKEPTICISM

RE US COMMITMENT ON SOUTHERN AFRICAN ISSUES. COTTER APPRECIATED THE OBSERVATION AND SAID HE WOULD TRY TO PRESENT THE MATTER IN MORE GENERAL TERMS.

7. COMMENT: COTTER'S PRESENTATION IS UNLIKELY TO PRODUCE ANY DIRECT RESULTS IN NIGERIAN POLIY, BUT DISCUSSION OF CONGRESSIONAL CROSSCURRENTS MIGHT MAKE GOWON MORE AWARE OF COMPLEXITIES AND PROBLEMS USG FACES IN FOREIGN POLICY AREA AND THE NEED FOR AFRICAN STATES TO KEEP THIS IN MIND AS THEY SEEK TO RETAIN AND STRENGTHEN US SUPPORT ON SOUTHERN AFRICA.

8. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER IF COTTER/GOWON MEETING MATERIALIZES AND COTTER IS ABLE TO GET BACK TO US ON THE SUBJECT.  
CROSBY

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## Message Attributes

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